

room has been concluded, a buffet breakfast will be served in the dining room.

White House Grounds Closed.

The White House grounds will be closed tomorrow and none except those who have been invited will be permitted to enter. It is realized that if the grounds were opened during the earlier part of the day they would be filled early and difficulty would be encountered in getting the crowd out. The executive offices will also be closed throughout the day and all work will be suspended.

Major Richard Sylvester, superintendent of the Metropolitan Police Department, has perfected arrangements for keeping the streets adjoining the White House open so that carriages will be permitted free access to the gates, and congestion prevented.

Photographers and special newspaper writers have been arriving from all over the country, some coming to the American capital from European countries. However, only a limited number of newspaper men have been invited, and these are either personally known or are personal friends of the family.

UNANIMOUS FOR RAILROAD BILLS

(Continued From First Page.)

In order that localities might be thoroughly protected, Judge Phlegar offered and secured the adoption of an amendment to this bill providing that if a new charter is obtained, the property of the company shall under the new charter, be vested in the company as fully as it was under the former charter, and neither a new charter nor any amendment or extension of a charter shall be construed as releasing the company from any contract obligation to the State or to any county, city, town or person who has acquired property in the company at the time it surrenders its charter or applies for an amendment to or extension of its charter. When an existing legislative charter is surrendered and a new charter applied for, such new charter will not release the company from the duty to complete its road to the terminal mentioned in the legislative charter.

Cleared the Atmosphere.

Concerning the merger proposition, a new bill, drafted by the State proxies, and the consent and approval of the railway authorities, was reported by the committee. In this bill also is an amendment to the general law governing corporations, which amendment, striking at the seat of the trouble, cleared the atmosphere at once. It is as follows:

Provided, however, that no agreement for the merger or consolidation of any corporation in which the State of Virginia, in her own name or otherwise, is a stockholder, or into another corporation, in any manner whatsoever, shall be submitted to or voted upon at any meeting of the stockholders until such agreement has been published in such successive weeks in the daily paper having the largest circulation at Richmond and submitted (1) to the Governor of Virginia, and (2) to the Board of Sinking Fund Commissioners of Virginia, and (3) to the State Corporation Commission of Virginia; and shall have been approved by said Board of Sinking Fund Commissioners and State Corporation Commission, the last two acting separately by resolutions spread upon their respective records; provided further, that the said Governor and said Board of Sinking Fund Commissioners, and said State Corporation Commission shall have full and complete power and authority on behalf of the State of Virginia to approve or reject any such agreement of merger or consolidation, and provided further, that every merger or consolidation of a corporation in which the State of Virginia is a stockholder, in her own name or otherwise, with or into another corporation, in any manner whatsoever, shall be absolutely void unless and until the agreement of merger or consolidation, containing all of the terms, conditions and provisions thereof, shall have received the approval of the Governor of Virginia, the Board of Sinking Fund Commissioners of Virginia, and the State Corporation Commission of Virginia.

The other two bills refer specifically to the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac. One of them concerns the number of directors the State shall have in the new board. The other bill is secured and the other authorizes the sinking fund commissioners to convert the stock and dividend obligations it now holds in the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac into the stocks of the new company. The bill also provides the same ratio of proportion to another stock to be issued under the charter as the present stock of the State bears to the entire present stock. These bills were reported as originally drawn without amendments.

Those Who Spoke.

Among those who spoke during the evening were Judge Leake, Lieutenant-Governor Elyson, State director on the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac board, Judge Holliday, one of the State proxies, and Judge John C. Dew, second auditor, representing the Board of Sinking Fund Commissioners. All of these gentlemen favored the bills as finally drawn. Mr. Thomas, of Lynchburg, a member of the committee, was the most vigorous in his opposition, and apparently entered the discussion with decided objections, all of which were removed in the course of the evening.

The safeguards thrown around the merger proposition were clear and convincing. The bill, however, proposed and insisted upon the clause making the publication of the contract necessary.

Many interesting things in connection with the two roads were brought out, but these have been very generally canvassed before. The Pennsylvania Railroad was mentioned once or twice incidentally, and Judge Leake at one time referred to it.

The people of Richmond will probably give the distinguished American citizen, Senator La Follette, who appears in the Academy of Music to-night, under the auspices of the Young Men's Christian Association, a public hearing. Today, a man of not only powerful words, but also of a splendid voice, Senator La Follette stands to-day among the first.

La Follette, ex-Governor of the Badger State, a man who, upon his entrance to public life, was met by a noble victory in his own State, achieving the overthrow of the machine in his own party. The only small thing about him is his size. Small in stature, a giant in intellect, a demagogue in oratory, a man of forcible logic, accompanied by quaint humor, he not only entertains in magnificent style, but instructs and enlightens. He is a man of the people, and he will be "The Menace of Machine Rule," or "Graft and Greediness." The senator is in constant demand, and he is a public business for lecture engagements, giving only a few evenings nights when he is not in the city.

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Derbys, Operas, Silks and Crushes.

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point declared flatly that he could not agree with Mr. Thomas, who said he "assumed that the Pennsylvania was behind this whole business." Everywhere throughout the discussion the importance of holding on to Virginia's stock, which it was predicted would advance enormously in value, was emphasized by rail, road and State officials alike. Judge Leake made a perfectly frank and open statement. He held out no promises, but believed that the old charter would in the course of a short while a year or two be surrendered and a new charter absolutely nothing had been determined, and it was as possible as not, more in fact it seemed, that the consolidation would never occur. In any event no merger would ever be made without the consent of the State.

"The State has too much power," declared the president. "They would never be such fools as to antagonize the State. Fear alone, if nothing else, would stop them. And right here, gentlemen, I want to say to you that we have on our board some of the highest-minded men in this country."

In Highest Praise.

As State director, Lieutenant-Governor Elyson referred in the highest terms to the road, declaring that during his twelve years of association with it, it had always been willing to defer to the State, so much so that the board of directors would never hold a meeting unless the State officials were present. He favored the bill with the proviso touching the merger. Judge Drew made a very explicit statement, setting forth that the only conceivable objections that the Sinking Fund Commissioners might have had were entirely removed by the merger provision. In the respect that it explained clearly the real animus of the movement, the speech of Judge Holliday, one of the six State proxies, was, however, most interesting of all.

He referred to the antiquity of the present charter and called attention to the fact that a change would bring the road under the general railroad law, like all other railroads in the State, subject to the State Corporation Commission, and besides, would mean an increase in revenue of \$25,000 in taxes, exclusive of local assessments.

You must understand thoroughly, gentlemen," said Judge Holliday, "that this is not a movement begun by the railroad company itself. It was initiated by the State proxies. We have for five years been pressing the company to give up its old charter and take a new one. We were received in the most cordial spirit, as we have always been treated. We honestly believe that the company could do this and could even merge with another road under the laws now existing, and without special legislation, but the company was unwilling to do this without allowing the General Assembly to pass upon it. Hence these bills, under which it is impossible for injury to be done to the State. We are all animated by a single purpose, and that purpose is to safeguard the interest of the State, a property of enormous and increasing value."

LA FOLLETTE AT ACADEMY TO-NIGHT

United States Senator Who Won Fame As Machine Fighter to Speak.

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DURNOVO OR WITTE TO QUIT CABINET

Chances of Victory Said to Incline to the Side of the Count.

Gov. Generals the Cause Witte Insists latter Must Be Deprived of Extreme Powers Before Elections.

(By Associated Press.)

ST. PETERSBURG, February 16.—Information has reached the Associated Press that the desperate struggle which has been raging in the government between the reactionary and the progressive forces is approaching a culmination, and must end within a few days by the resignation either of Minister of the Interior Durnovo, who is leading the movement for thoroughgoing repression, or of Premier Witte and several other members of the cabinet.

The question at issue is the withdrawal of the extraordinary powers conferred in government-general throughout the empire, which, in many instances, it is alleged, have been exercised for the repression not only of political disorders, but also of the political activity of the parties.

The discussion has reached such an acute and passionate stage in the cabinet that no other issue than the fall of one faction or the other is possible. The chances of victory incline to the side of Count Witte, who insists that the government-general must be deprived of its extreme powers within a fortnight in order to remove the restrictions upon a free electoral campaign.

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